



# CLERK'S OFFICE ALERT

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## **Announcing the Early Mediation Pilot Project**

Recognizing the benefits of early settlement, the trustees of the King County Bar Association, based on work of the KCBA's Judiciary and Courts Committee, recommended that King County Superior Court adopt an early mediation requirement for most civil cases. The King County Superior Court has agreed to a pilot project to evaluate the benefits of early mediation.

The pilot project will begin September 2010. Randomly selected civil cases that would generally receive an 18-month civil case schedule will instead receive a modified case schedule. The pilot project random selection process will continue approximately 2 months in order to capture 1,800 cases. This represents 10% of the cases that normally receive the 18 month civil case schedule on an annual basis, which is a statistically significant sample.

The pilot project case schedule is set forth below. In essence, the pilot project case schedule will add two deadlines: 1) filing a mediation plan 17 weeks after filing; and, 2) completing mediation 21 weeks before trial. These new deadlines occur before the discovery cut-off deadline.

The KCBA and the Court are hopeful that the proposed early mediation rule will encourage early settlement and reduce the number of cases that settle close to the date of trial, thus providing cost savings to the parties and allowing the Court to focus its resources on the cases that will actually be tried.

See the Pilot Project Procedures, the administrative general order and the model case schedule on the Clerk's Website at the following web address: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/Clerk.aspx>, or by accessing the link at the bottom of this e-mail.

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**ISSUED BY:** Barbara Miner, Director and Superior Court Clerk

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